

# Opinion

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## EDITORIAL

# Saving a treasure of Baker's history

The boxes that hold a significant part of Baker County's and Baker City's history have made quite a journey since they left here almost 70 years ago.

But after decades stored in one garage or another, in Eugene and Portland and finally in Vancouver, Washington, the boxes and their precious contents returned to Baker City about two weeks ago.

They might well have ended up buried beneath tons of dirt in a landfill.

The boxes contain hundreds of photographs, negatives and other materials amassed by Robert N. Gambs, a professional photographer who owned a studio on Main Street in Baker City during the 1930s and 1940s. Selected items will eventually become part of the Baker County Library District's Historic Photo Collection.

That the boxes ended up back in Baker City, where Gambs filled them in 1950 before moving to Eugene, rather than rotting among layers of trash, is a testament to several people.

First is Gambs himself, although it seems we must also thank the Great Depression. Gambs' son, Jon Gambs, who was born in Baker City in 1945 and now lives in Vancouver, said his father, who grew up during the Depression, was so accustomed to frugality that, in Jon's words, "Dad kept everything."

Jon Gambs inherited the boxes after his father died in 1996. And although Jon admits he was at times close to throwing the boxes away, he never did.

The boxes traveled from Jon's home to that of his daughter and son-in-law, Ryan and Nicole Kruse, who also live in Vancouver. Ryan had the foresight to call the Baker County Library to see if there was interest locally in the boxes.

Perry Stokes, the library district director, not only said yes, but he arranged to pick up the boxes from the Kruses while he was attending a library conference in Vancouver in mid April.

Since Stokes returned with the treasure, Baker City historian Gary Dielman has been sorting through the contents, a preliminary step in deciding which of Robert Gambs' photos will be added to the library district's collection.

Dielman said the Gambs photos are invaluable because they cover an era that isn't well-represented in the current collection. That the photos were taken by a professional and are of high quality, and that Gambs photographed a wide variety of people, places and scenes, are added bonuses.

Ultimately, everyone who is interested in our area's history, or just enjoys seeing what Baker City looked like in the World War II era, should be grateful to Robert Gambs for his thriftiness, and to him and his descendants for keeping those irreplaceable boxes for so long.

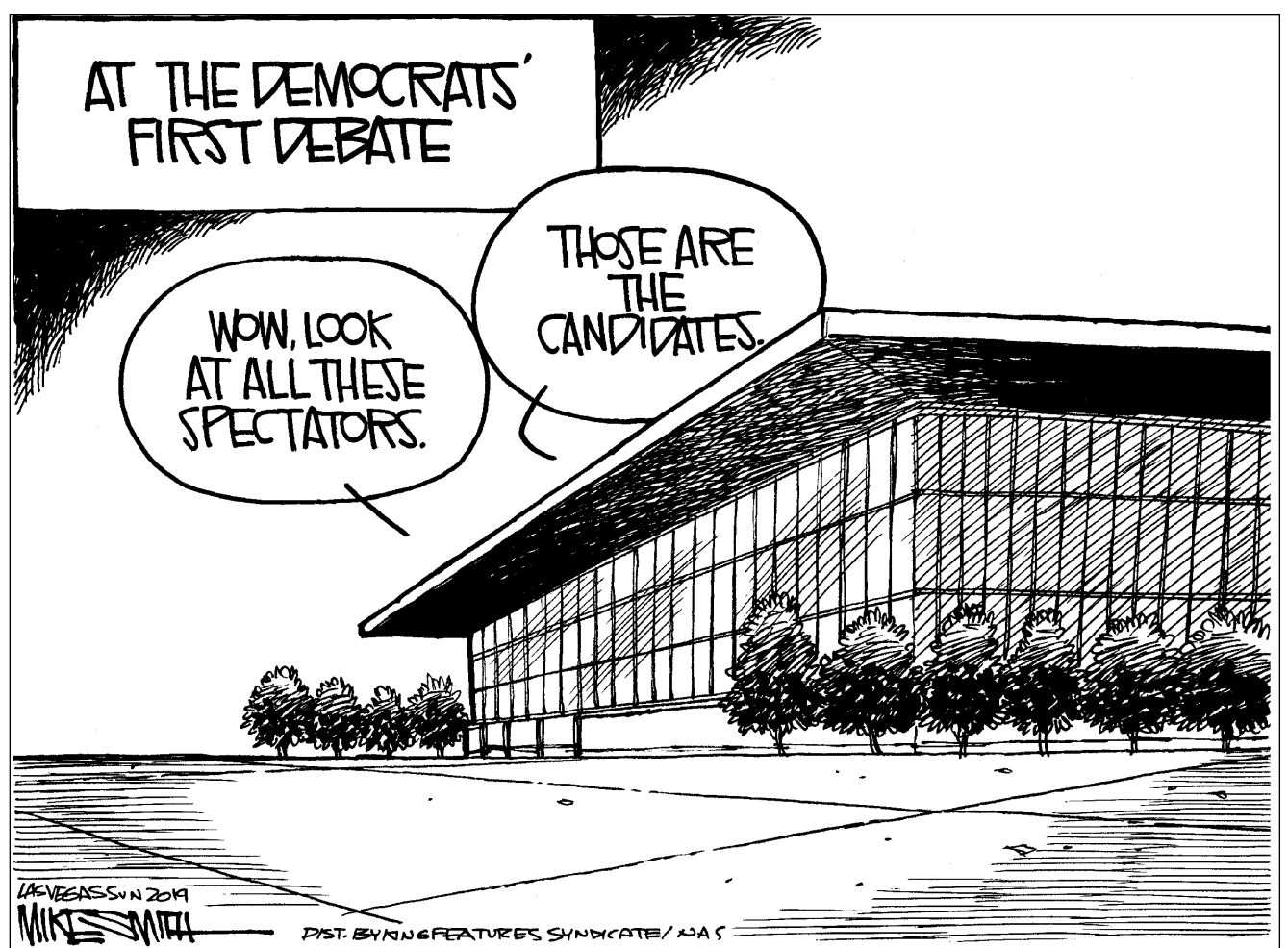
Because they did, Gambs' legacy will last far longer than he probably would have expected.

— Jayson Jacoby, Baker City Herald editor

## Letters to the editor

- We welcome letters on any issue of public interest. Customer complaints about specific businesses will not be printed.
- Letters are limited to 350 words; longer letters will be edited for length. Writers are limited to one letter every 15 days.
- The writer must sign the letter and include an address and phone number (for verification only). Letters that do not include this information cannot be published.
- Letters will be edited for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons.

**Mail:** To the Editor, Baker City Herald, P.O. Box 807, Baker City, OR 97814  
**Email:** news@bakercityherald.com



# Mueller report: Worth a read

JOHN M. CRISP

Robert Mueller's report landed with an anticlimactic thud. It seems to have changed no one's mind or made anyone particularly happy. If you believed that President Donald Trump was guilty of collusion and obstruction before the report came out, you probably still do. And if you didn't believe it before, you still don't.

But how many of us have actually read the report? At nearly 450 pages, it's a bit of a lift. But it's a fast read. Many pages are heavily redacted; some are completely blacked out. Further, the text on many pages is limited by extensive footnoting.

So here's a fine civic exercise: All Americans should set aside partisanship, as best they can, and carefully read the report that has been the focus of so much attention. That's what I did last week. Here's some of what I found: If you've followed the investigation for the last two years, you will see things in the report that you already know. But Mueller's cohesive narrative describes, organizes and contextualizes the complicated events surrounding the 2016 election in a helpfully lucid way.

The report doesn't read like a witch hunt, hack job or hoax cobbled together by partisan Democrats. The prose depends heavily on sworn testimony, corroborating witnesses and supporting documentation — thus, the extensive footnoting.

In fact, Trump-haters may be disappointed in the rigor with which Mueller makes the "no collusion" case. A good example of this is Mueller's treatment of the infamous June 9, 2016, Trump Tower meeting, which on its face looks like a collusion slam dunk. High-ranking members of the Trump campaign

— Paul Manafort, Jared Kushner, Donald Trump Jr. — met with well-connected Russians promising "dirt" on Hillary Clinton.

But beginning on page 180 of Volume I and continuing for about 10 pages, Mueller scrupulously details why the meeting — inadvisable as it might have been and despite attempts to cover up its true purpose — could probably not be successfully prosecuted as conspiracy.

This may disappoint Trump's opponents, but it underscores the nonpartisan standing of the report.

But here's the most important takeaway from the report: The amount of Russian involvement in the 2016 election is staggering, far beyond Jared Kushner's characterization last week when he called it "a couple of Facebook ads."

No, Russian meddling in the election was extensive, well-funded and thoroughly connected to the highest levels of the Russian government, as the Mueller report scrupulously documents. And high-level operatives in the Trump campaign, wittingly or unwittingly, had many connections to the Russians. Clearly Russian interference impacted the election, but we're unlikely to ever know for sure how much it skewed the outcome.

This is important because not much has been done to prevent future meddling. Last week the New York Times reported that Kirstjen Nielsen, recently fired homeland security secretary, was thwarted in her attempts to raise the issue of Russian meddling in future

elections. Trump just doesn't want to hear about it. Thus, we're still vulnerable.

Mueller's portrayal of Russia's deep involvement in the election helps make sense of other aspects of this episode, including Trump's desperate attempts to obstruct the investigation, painstakingly described in Volume II.

The report helps us understand other events, as well, for example the infamous press conference at the Helsinki summit in 2018. The two men on the stage, Putin and Trump, shared more or less the same knowledge about Russian interference in the 2016 election and more or less the same goal, to keep it a secret.

Putin, smug and self-satisfied, has no compunction about lying; in fact, he's probably not particularly worried about being found out.

Trump, on the other hand, is desperate to keep secret the contacts between his campaign officials and high-ranking Russians; he had already tried to fire the special counsel investigating the links.

Trump's fawning equivocation — "I don't see why it would be Russia" — serves the same end as Putin's bald-faced lie. Is this collusion? Coordination? Conspiracy?

It doesn't matter. Both men clearly knew how to work together to hide the truth. And hiding the truth is the theme that links the Russians and Trump campaign throughout the Mueller report. Give it a read.

John M. Crisp, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, lives in Georgetown, Texas, and can be reached at jcrispcolumns@gmail.com.

## GUEST EDITORIAL

# Trump right to call for vaccination

**Editorial from The New York Daily News:**

"They have to get the shot." Three cheers for Donald Trump. No, we really mean it. The president is supposed to be the leader of the nation, and on Friday Trump took on the mantle in calling for Americans to get vaccinated as the country is suffering a measles outbreak, much of it here in New York.

Trump, who used to play a dangerous game of footsie with the anti-vaxxer kooks, instead became Public Health Officer No. 1. Vaccines do not cause autism. But measles do cause death.

Measles was once considered wiped out in the United States, but the kooks have had success in spreading their lies into the ultra-Orthodox Jewish

community in Brooklyn and Rockland County and hundreds have contracted the disease.

Listening to real health experts, Trump said, "the vaccinations are so important. This is going around now. They have to get their shots." Yes. Yes. Yes.

Just like Mayor de Blasio has been focusing on measles in Williamsburg and County Executive Ed Day in Rockland, the president needs to help fight this health emergency, which has also produced a quarantine at two California universities. It's not just a harmless childhood ailment of red dots. Measles can, and does, kill.

And the vaccine is safe and effective. And mandatory for kids in school, except those claiming a religious exemp-

tion.

The drive in Albany to end that exemption is commendable. No faith believes in spreading disease, Judaism included. A deadly and very contagious plague that can be stopped with a completely benign medicine must be eliminated and stay eliminated. This horrible episode has proved one thing: That the vaccine does work and without it everyone is at risk.

The fight against measles isn't about finding a way to prevent the disease; we've long had the vaccine. It's about finding a way to make people get the shot, as Trump rightly says. Science has succeeded, but public enlightenment has failed. Trump's welcome words can only help rectify that.

## CONTACT YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

**Baker City Hall:** 1655 First Street, P.O. Box 650, Baker City, OR 97814; 541-523-6541; fax 541-524-2049. City Council meets the second and fourth Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in Council Chambers. Mike Downing, Loran Joseph, Randy Schiewe, Lynette

Perry, Arvid Andersen, Ken Gross and Doni Bruland.

**Baker City administration:** 541-523-6541. Fred Warner Jr., city manager; Dustin Newman, police chief; John Clark, fire chief; Michelle Owen, public works

director.

**Baker County Commission:** Baker County Courthouse 1995 3rd St., Baker City, OR 97814; 541-523-8200. Meets the first and third Wednesdays at 9 a.m.; Bill Harvey (chair), Mark Bennett, Bruce Nichols.